not be good. This extremely unpleasant prescription, in conjunction with the expensive medicine, stands in the way of a greater distribution of smelting enterprises. Even in places where a hut for iron smelting is already in existence, people prefer to buy iron from others if their own has been a failure several times, for this misfortune is attributed to the failure of the fire as a result of the sexual /226/ impurity of one or a number of the participants. The importation of European iron in recent years is dealing a death blow to the native industry. The fear of bringing anything impure (and all sexual matters are pre-eminently regarded as such) into contact with pure fire goes so far that a medicine is made by those participants whose wives menstruate during the smelting. This consists of a diamond-shape piece cut out of the bark on the supporting beam of the smelting hut on the side facing the furnace, and it is supposed to represent the female sex organ. The symbol is rubbed with redwood which has been pulverized by the woman concerned and represents her blood flow; it is covered with a leaf of the Myrianthus arboreus P.B. (mangâme III Fang) to indicate that one wants everything impure to be hidden and therefore harmless. At the same time the plant is supposed to cause the iron to coalesce to the same degree as the individual fruits are united in a syncarp. In Plate 17 one can see a piece of the leaf on the supporting post (top left), as well as (somewhat lower down) a bark container which holds fragments of ancestors' skulls, a number of antelopes' horns, and a great variety of other medicines that are used later. That the people concerned with the ancestor cult are regarded as particularly suited to bring the work to a successful conclusion is apparent from the fact that they alone may tend the fire (see Fig. 183).

The smelting of iron is thus above all under the aegis of the fire cult, but it is also closely linked with the worship of the ancestors who contribute to the success of the enterprise insofar as it lies in their power to do so.

Iron crops out in the form of brown iron ore (sêl IV) (1) and is

1. The analysis carried out by Mr. Du Bois at the suggestion of Professor Pufahl (Königliche Bergakademie in Berlin)

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showed that the ore "exhibits a not inconsiderable titanium content, some sulphur, traces of phosphoric acid, a small calcium content, as well as a small magnesium content, in addition to the usual components, such as silicic acid, iron oxide, aluminum oxide, water, and small quantities of manganese."

simply collected and carried off. The iron ore pits (ebɛ̂-asɛ̂ from asɛ̂i, "rock containing iron") have no special significance for the Pangwe; they are common or rather ownerless property that could be claimed by anyone. The smelting of the iron ore, on the other hand, takes place in special smelting huts which are usually the common property of several fellow villagers; they alone may produce the iron from the ironstone which they themselves have extracted from the pits. The other people in the village may not use the smelting hut and must buy iron from them. Because of the difficulties involved in the enterprise, smelting is done only at /227/ widely separated intervals of time. On each occasion the furnace is loaded rapidly as many times in succession as there are hut owners on hand. Each owner, therefore, has a claim to the iron obtained from one loading of the furnace.

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The smelting hut (ndɛ̂-akɛ̂, ndɛ̂i-akɛ̂a). Figures 181 and 182, is a simple lean-to, three to four meters high, whose ridge pole is supported by two beams. A pit (Fig. 182, Drawing 5, c), 78 centimeters deep and 1.86 meters in diameter, is dug into the ground in the center of the hut and the furnace is built over it. Another shaft (Drawing 5, b), about 60 centimeters deep, goes down from the floor of the pit, and it is on the bottom of this shaft that the above-mentioned pot with the smelting medicine is placed (Drawing 5, a). The medicine is covered with rotten leaf sheaths from the plantain so that the skulls will stay nice and cool, and then the entire shaft is filled with leaves.

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If smelting is contemplated, all the participants, that is, the medicine man, the hut owner or owners, and the hired workers, must, as was mentioned, abstain for two months from sexual

5: Balandier--15 E-5 (1946-1951) 1955 F119 Fang F119

511 N'Goumié and Woleu-N'Tem was a "reservoir of manpower") by
702 upsetting its demographic equilibrium. Consequently, most of the administrative reports stress the poverty and mediocrity of the villages, the political instability and "indiscipline," and the eagerness with which all innovations are greeted in the hope of improving conditions. [84]

Region of the Maritime Ogooué

178 During the second half of the nineteenth century the Fang descended the Ogooué in order to reach the trading centers established on the river, and the counting houses of the coast. They pushed back the Bakèlè, imposed themselves on the Galwa and the Nkomi. Since 1880 the Fang have settled in large numbers along
361 the Ogooué as a result of a penetration which organized convoys on the river, created posts, and made possible the settlement of traders.

361 The Fang are settled in the four districts forming this adminis-
162 trative region, but in that of Omboué, the extreme point of their advance, they represent less than 5 percent of the population. Ninety-five percent of the 9,300 inhabitants of N'Djolé District are Fang who have taken the place of the ancient Bakélé people. They belong to the Mahé, Nzaman, and Bêtsi groups; the first of these was located downstream from N'Djolé before 1865 (1).

1. Captain Cureault, op. cit.

They came largely from the Lower Ivindo, but also from the Woleu-N'Tem, where the villagers soon sought to obtain commercial outlets on the Ogooué. Outside of a small mine exploitation at
[314] N'Djolé, this district is extremely bare. Consequently, the very scattered villages have a miserable appearance, and the male
[44] population has been canvassed (or recruited) by the neighboring lumber works and by the coastal centers.

523 Lambaréné District, which is very important because of its
[361] forest exploitations (and also because it is an old commercial
313 center, still has a largely Fang population. These are in opposition to the aboriginal group of the Galwa (less than 2,200 individuals)